

## BALKANIZATION AND THE POSITIVE SOVEREIGNTY DEFICIT IN AFRICA

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**BALKANIZATION AND THE POSITIVE SOVEREIGNTY DEFICIT IN AFRICA**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The Positive Sovereignty deficit in Africa creates social conditions in which African states may fail to provide commodities, goods and services or an equitable distribution thereof. Said constraints serve to ignite ethnic mobilization and potentially, ethnic conflict as groups compete for resources to provide for themselves what their governments will not or cannot. The Positive Sovereignty deficit, chronic insecurity and ethnic mobilization are inextricably linked.





## BALKANIZATION AND THE POSITIVE SOVEREIGNTY DEFICIT IN AFRICA

The United States' interest in Africa is growing at a time when the security challenges there are becoming increasingly challenging and complex.<sup>1</sup> In the fifty years since most of Africa regained independence from her former colonial masters, African states are not more secure.<sup>2</sup> With the exception of perhaps Ghana and a few other countries, states in Africa are less secure. Militia factions, armed gangs, criminals, mercenaries and terrorists alike are very much involved in the continent's civil wars, fighting both for and against African governments.<sup>3</sup> Other security challenges on the African continent include poor governance, corruption, terrorism, drug trafficking, and piracy on the west and east coast of Africa. Organized criminal activities include oil bunkering in the Gulf of Guinea, kidnapping, human smuggling and trafficking in persons, weapons smuggling, drug trafficking and environmental and financial crimes.<sup>4</sup>

The causes for Africa's security challenges have internal and external roots but the security challenges persist because many African states are weak and they lack the resources to confront their own problems. Accordingly, the thesis of this paper posits that the Positive Sovereignty deficit in Africa creates social conditions in which African states may fail to provide commodities, goods and services or an equitable distribution thereof. Said constraints serve to ignite ethnic mobilization and potentially, ethnic conflict as groups compete for resources to provide for themselves what their governments will not or cannot.<sup>5</sup> This paper contends that the Positive Sovereignty deficit, chronic insecurity and ethnic mobilization are inextricably linked.

This paper presents empirical evidence which suggests that some states in Sub-Saharan Africa are experiencing balkanization, or fracturing due to ethnic conflict. In

doing so, this paper reviews the dominant themes in African security literature and then examines empirical evidence from Zimbabwe, Liberia and the Ivory Coast which supports this paper's thesis. Subsequently, this paper will discuss Africa's youth bulge and assess its potential to exacerbate insecurity, ethnic mobilization and balkanization of African states. This paper will conclude with a recommendation for U.S. policy in Africa.

In the early 1960s, the first generation of African statesmen referenced a Balkanization of Africa but primarily within the context of decolonization and the potential for further political disintegration and fragmentation of African states.<sup>6</sup> Since then, the concept of Balkanization in Africa has received light academic treatment. Balkanization is a geopolitical term used to describe the ethnic fragmentation or division of a region or state into smaller regions or states that are often hostile or non-cooperative with each other.<sup>7</sup>

African literature clearly suggests that the culprit for Africa's Balkanization lies in its socio-cultural development. The European colonization of the African continent was the point at which the political dynamics of African societies ceased to develop from a uniquely African perspective.<sup>8</sup> As such, colonialism changed the natural progression of African political culture. African development literature also notes that there are significant negative manifestations of the colonial legacy on African political culture. Primary among these manifestations are Personal Rule and State Inversion and these manifestations are, in part, responsible for rising ethnic tensions in Africa.

Many African scholars explain Africa's lack of development and security problems as a legacy of colonialism.<sup>9</sup> Colonial governments were centralized,

bureaucratic, authoritarian regimes designed for the domination of the African people. Because of a lack of alternatives at the time of decolonization, African states adopted the governing and administrative institutions of their European colonizers. These institutions were functionally conceived to service external economies and it was these colonial Institutions that provided the framework from which new African states would develop. In a government without effective institutions, enforcement of rules can be random or rules can be defied and ignored.

A consequence of weak institutions is weak governments. Many African governments can be accurately characterized by clientelist politics and authoritarian governments that have extremely limited control and administrative capacity. The effects of weak African governments are economic crises, marginalization, political weakness and ill ecological and social health.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, because there were few rules to prevent them from doing so, post-colonial leaders were able to control and monopolize the wealth and resources of their state to protect their political power. African security literature calls this particular exercise of political power as Personal Rule. Personal Rule is defined as an autonomous political realm where political actors are free to make their own choices.<sup>11</sup> It is a dynamic world of political will and action that is ordered less by institutions than by personal power.<sup>12</sup>

The major element of control in Personal Rule is the patron-client relationship. In this relationship, a characteristic of many African states, the ruler, or patron, controls resources that the client wants. There is usually a reciprocal exchange of favors in this relationship. For example, if the patron wants votes, the client will mobilize voters in

accordance with the patron's directive. Ultimately, the patronage system creates a pyramid that descends from the ruler, to client, to mass constituencies.

The purpose of the system is to create a material basis for political consensus. Personal Rulers control the wealth and power of the state and trade access to wealth and power for political favors. The Personal Ruler creates a web of loyalty networks diversified among the most important sectors of the state including ruling parties, military, central bank, legislature and intelligence services. After the Personal Ruler has established his patron-client network, he is nearly impossible to remove from office. Finally, where there is Personal Rule, there is also a corresponding control over the distribution of goods and services for political purposes. Personal Rulers can and do "apportion" scarce goods and services through their patronage networks for any number of political reasons. The salient point is that the political control of goods and services means that the distribution of goods and services is not equitable and that lack of equity provides the impetus for the mobilization of ethnicity in order to compete for scarce resources in an insecure environment.

It may appear that the institutions of African governments perhaps lacked a public system of rules that defined public offices and the rights, duties and responsibilities of public officers.<sup>13</sup> However, this is true only to an extent. The institutions of government had rules, but they served the interests of the Personal Ruler. Accordingly, the social contract established between the Personal Ruler and the African people is quite an oddity from a Western, neo-liberal perspective.

The second legacy of colonialism is state inversion. State Inversion is a multi-causal process of decay and is characterized by a state bureaucratic infrastructure that

is unable to perform the most fundamental policy making and implementing functions outside the capital or the national urban core; and inability to fulfill the Positive Sovereignty function of a state.<sup>14</sup> Positive Sovereignty is substantive rather than a formal condition which reflects a nation's capability to govern in accordance with international norms and to effectively manage the internal and international affairs of the state.<sup>15</sup> There are many reasons that a state can experience inversion. As discussed, African governments inherited weak institutions which have become weaker and increasingly dysfunctional over time. Consequently, the state becomes irrelevant for society because the state has failed its positive sovereignty role and cannot provide equity in the distribution of scarce services and public goods, if any at all.<sup>16</sup> The state loses legitimacy and the loyalty of the citizenry if it cannot deliver goods and services. In Africa, the process of State Inversion readily manifests in certain types of states. These states can be classified as Extractive States and Weak States.

Extractive States exist to extract wealth from the state and the people.<sup>17</sup> In Extractive States, inputs and credits into the system of government are siphoned off by the civil servants running the institutions of that government. The government services that do exist function only to extract wealth from the people. The beneficiaries of the extractive state are the political elites who run the government. Accordingly, the key point is that Extractive States have an unjust and uneven distribution of goods and services and it is the uneven distribution of goods and services that provide the momentum for the mobilization of ethnicity in order to compete for resources. This is a common theme throughout this paper.

Likewise, Weak States are those states that cannot fulfill the Positive Sovereignty function of the state and survive primarily because of outside, international support. A Weak State may also be an Extractive State, but not necessarily so. There are many examples of Weak States. Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, and Chad are all examples of a weak state. Indeed, an argument can be made that most African states are not capable or are too incompetent to deliver goods and services in a manner that is fair and even to the people. Thus, there is an uneven distribution of goods and services and this, too, provides the basis for ethnic mobilization to compete for scarce resources.

So, a consequence of Personal Rule and State Inversion is ethnic mobilization. This paper's thesis states that groups will mobilize to compete for scarce resources. The competition will be primarily among groups but competition can also be directed at the government and that competition can lead to the partition and potentially to the collapse of a state. The mobilization of ethnicity is, therefore, one of Africa's most significant security challenges and will be the first security challenge that will be discussed in more detail.

Harvard University's Robert Bates believes that ethnicity is mobilized through competition for scarce resources and that ethnic groups are political groups formed on a basis of material interests. As such ethnic groups are not limited to blood lines or kinship and can include individuals from all socioeconomic levels. Consequently, ethnic groups persist because of their ability to compete and secure goods and services.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Ian Spears argues that ethnic groups are formed and sustained because they can compete in anarchic environments for security and the means for survival which

includes scarce resources.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, ethnic mobilization reflects that competition for security and resources in Africa is a zero sum game. One ethnic group wins and another loses. In Africa, the consequence of losing is well understood by all: less security, loss of means to exist, and potentially death. This particular dynamic of life in Africa can trigger a survival interest which can motivate ethnic groups to commit horrific acts of violence on other competing ethnic groups.

As an example of ethnic mobilization under a Personal Ruler, Zimbabwe's recent 2008 Presidential and Parliamentary elections offer an excellent example of an artful and brutal mobilization of ethnicity to serve political ends under Robert Mugabe.<sup>20</sup> In the run-up to the March 29, 2008 elections, campaigning in Zimbabwe was relatively benign. Candidates and their supporters from the ruling ZANU-PF party frequently held political rallies in close proximity to the opposition political rallies for the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). In the final days preceding the election, supporters of the MDC and ZANU-PF spoke of a new political maturity in Zimbabwe where violence is not used as a tool to intimidate and suppress the supporters of the MDC. Zimbabweans were celebrating a political neutrality that had been experienced in the elections of 2000, 2002, and 2005. Indeed, even on Election Day, voting was orderly and peaceful.

The morning after the election, March 30<sup>th</sup>, Zimbabweans were euphoric that they had voted in an election that seemed to be free and fair. There was a genuine feeling of optimism that real change was in store for Zimbabwe. As the results from polling stations started arriving at the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) in Harare, the elites in ZANU-PF were stunned to learn that a coup was in progress via the ballot box. President Robert Mugabe had been the leader of Zimbabwe for 28 years and it

appeared that he and his ruling ZANU-PF political party would be defeated in the polls which would trigger a transition of power and a change of government.

For the ruling elite in ZANU-PF, the change that was coming at them from the ballot box represented an apocalypse. Everyone in the ruling ZANU-PF party would be deposed of their livelihoods because their access to wealth and power would cease upon a change of government. For 28 years the ZANU-PF elites ran Zimbabwe without regard for the people that they governed and from their perspective, they had liberated Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe was theirs to do with how they pleased. So, ZANU-PF ruled for themselves and they extracted the wealth of the state. Vast fortunes were made, acquired or stolen, human rights were violated and tens of thousands of Zimbabwe's ethnic minorities were murdered by government ZANU-PF thugs.

The crimes and atrocities committed by many of the ZANU-PF elite were not secrets. Thuggery is a common currency in Zimbabwe and the ZANU-PF elites knew who did what to whom. The worst offenders were often the highest ranking in ZANU-PF and these were the individuals who feared most that they could be held accountable for their crimes under a new Zimbabwean government led by the MDC. On the evening of March 30th, the initial shock and fear of the election result began to turn to anger which was directed at the electorate because they were too undisciplined to vote for the political party that was responsible for liberating the country from "white" rule. The political elite consulted with the Zimbabwean Security Chiefs late into the night. The Security Chiefs decided that, for the good of themselves and the ruling party, the status quo had to be protected; and they came up with a plan to do exactly that.



A week later, on April 08, 2008, with election results still unpublished, the Commander of the Zimbabwe Defense Force dispatched senior officers to supervise a re-education campaign in the constituencies of Zimbabwe that did not vote for Mugabe and other ZANU-PF politicians. Vast resources were mobilized for this effort. Transportation, fuel, money, food, police, operatives from the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), War Veterans, and the Youth Brigade were all mobilized and the ZEC provided them all with detailed information of how every constituency voted in Zimbabwe. Such detailed information made it easy to figure out who supported ZANU-PF and, more importantly, who did not.

The purpose of the re-education campaign was to prepare the electorate to vote for Mugabe in the still unannounced presidential run-off election. The campaign, however, was decentralized so it was really up to the local military commander to determine how best to prosecute the re-education campaign in their assigned areas of operation. A few of the military commanders were lenient and relied primarily on threats of violence if they failed to vote for Mugabe in the run-off election. In those few cases, MDC supporters were required to make public apologies for failing the ideals of the Zimbabwean revolution and were required to pay reparations in livestock or other goods. In the majority of the constituencies, however, military commanders were not directive with their re-education coalition partners. Commander's allowed the police, CIO, War Veterans and the Youth Brigade to conduct their own investigations and mete out justice however they deemed appropriate. In these cases, homes were looted and destroyed, livestock slaughtered or stolen, and families were savagely beaten and murdered. The re-education teams reveled in their power to incite fear, to steal, beat,

maim and kill those who were deemed to be supporters of the MDC. In the worst areas affected by violence, the re-education campaign was the means to pay oneself and to appropriate and redistribute the wealth of those who supported the MDC.

It was not until May 02, 2008, 5 weeks after the election, that the ZEC announced the results of the presidential election. The Chief Election officer announced that Morgan Tsvangirai received 1,195,562 votes, or 47.9% of the vote with Robert Mugabe receiving 1,079,730 votes or 43.2% of the total votes.<sup>21</sup>

On May 10, 2008, the ZEC announced that the run-off election would be held on June 27 and confirmed that the procedure for voting in the run-off election would be the same as for the March 29<sup>th</sup> election. This key stipulation required that only registered voters would be able to vote and they would have to vote in the local community in which they had originally registered to vote.<sup>22</sup> This was problematic for MDC supporters because one of ZANU-PF's strategies was to displace as many MDC supporters from their homes as possible. Estimates by mid May were that more than 100,000 Zimbabweans had already been displaced from their homes and villages and the violence directed at supporters of the MDC was still becoming more violent.

5 days before the run-off election, on June 22, 2008, and amid still worsening violence against supporters of the MDC, Morgan Tsvangirai withdrew from the runoff election. Morgan offered the following at his press conference as his reason for withdrawing from the election:<sup>23</sup>

The MDC won the March 29<sup>th</sup> elections despite conditions that were far from free and fair. Our election victory confirmed this to Mugabe and since that date, he and his supporters have been waging a war against the people of Zimbabwe.

This violent retributive agenda has seen over 200,000 people internally displaced and over 86 MDC supporters killed and more than 2,000 illegally

detained. Over 20,000 homes have been destroyed and more than 10,000 people have been injured and maimed in this orgy of violence.

The militia, war veterans and even Mugabe himself have made it clear that anyone that votes for me in the forthcoming election faces the very real possibility of being killed.

Zimbabweans have also shown how brave and resilient they can be. They have withstood years of brutality, impoverishment and intimidation. They are dedicated to a new democratic Zimbabwe.

But, we in the MDC, cannot ask them to cast their vote on June 27<sup>th</sup> when that vote could cost them their lives.

Therefore, we in the MDC have resolved that we will no longer participate in this violent, illegitimate sham of an election process.

The figures cited by Tsvangirai in his statement are reliable. There were many aid agencies and NGOs tracking and documenting the totality of the political violence perpetrated by ZANU-PF against supporters of the MDC. In the end, the ZEC rejected Tsvangirai's notice to withdraw from the election and the run-off occurred as scheduled on 27 June. Unlike the election of 29 March which took 5 weeks to announce the results, the Chief Elections Officer of the ZEC announced within 24 hours the results of the Presidential Run-Off Election: Mugabe – 2,150,269; Tsvangirai – 233,000.<sup>24</sup>

Indeed, Zimbabwe's 30 year existence very clearly fits the State Inversion model. It's existence since independence has been an increasing process of extraction by theft of both government and natural resources and political involution centered on a handful of rent-seeking cronies, leading to cannibalization of the state.<sup>25</sup> From 2007-2009, local estimates were that the rate of inflation was 200 million percent. Other, estimates pegged Zimbabwe's rate of inflation at 6.5 quindecillion novemdecillion percent - 65 followed by 107 zeros.<sup>26</sup> The Zimbabwe dollar was discontinued in favor of foreign currencies, Zimbabwe's social services sector has collapsed, unemployment is

estimated to be 90%, the national debt is three times the GDP, and the informal sector of the economy accounts for 60% of that GDP.<sup>27</sup> The Zimbabwean government has done very little to earn the loyalty of the vast majority of the people it governs.

The Fund for Peace maintains a Failed State index.<sup>28</sup> The Failed State Index ranks countries based on twelve indicators under social, economic, and political categories.<sup>29</sup> Out of 177 countries on the Fund for Peace 2010 Failed State Index, Zimbabwe ranks #4. Zimbabwe also ranks #4 on Foreign Policy Magazine's 2010 Failed State index.<sup>30</sup> In Zimbabwe, it is clear that a consequence of Mugabe's Personal Rule, bad governance, exclusionary politics and the uneven distribution of goods and services has led to ethnic competition which has been a primary factor in the partitioning of Zimbabwe. Indeed, the government of Zimbabwe, effectively the ruling ZANU-PF elites, stand apart from the people it governs.

Liberia is an example of a weak state and, too, very clearly reflects the State Inversion model. Liberia has had two civil wars with the last one ending in 2003. There are three former warring factions, 16 indigenous ethnic groups and 20 registered political parties.<sup>31</sup> The institutions of government are weak, there is an uneven distribution of goods and services, corruption continues to be a problem, political parties are weak, and politics continues to be personality-driven.<sup>32</sup> Currently, Liberia has very limited capacity to control or influence what happens outside of the capitol and remains incapable of fulfilling the positive sovereignty roll of the state and survives primarily because of outside, international support.

On September 08, 2010 Ellen Margrethe Loj, the UN secretary-general's special representative and coordinator of UN operations in Liberia reported on security

conditions in Liberia noting that “mob violence, ethnic and communal tensions, competition for natural resources, land disputes, sexual and gender-based violence and armed robbery, and alarming rates of unemployment, have all given rise to significant security concerns in Liberia. The Seven years of unbroken peace is fragile and relies heavily on the presence of UNMIL military and police”.<sup>33</sup> Likewise, The US Embassy in Monrovia informs potential travelers to Liberia that (1) the crime rate in Liberia is high and theft, assault, sexual crimes, and murder are particularly problematic; (2) the Liberia National Police are ill equipped and largely incapable of providing effective protection or investigation; (3) neither water nor electricity is commercially available in Liberia; (4) Hospitals and medical facilities in Liberia are very poorly equipped and are incapable of providing many services; and (5) the formal sector employs only 15% of Liberians.<sup>34</sup>

Despite this, there is some potential for improvement in many sectors in Liberia specifically because Liberia receives so much outside assistance from the US Government, European Union and other bilateral partners. In from June 01, 2009 to June 30, 2010, Monrovia received approximately 459 million in development assistance.<sup>35</sup> In 2007, Monrovia received 696 million and years prior back to 2003, an annual average of around 200 million per year.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, a United Nations Mission (UNMIL) has been in Liberia for 7 years and its mandate in Liberia has been extended until 30 September 2011. In accordance with my thesis however, Liberia should be vulnerable to a politicization of ethnicity because of the failure of the state to provide for the common good and deliver goods and services.

Liberia is divided into 15 counties. Each county is further subdivided into administrative districts headed by District Commissioners. The district is the lowest

administrative unit at which central government operates.”<sup>37</sup> Below the districts are villages, clans and cities or towns. Nimba County is located 200 kilometers from Monrovia and, despite its distance from Monrovia, is the second most populous county in Liberia. The simple reason that Nimba’s population is growing is because there is opportunity. Business men in Nimba County have organized to provide for themselves what the state government cannot. The engine behind the growth in Nimba is diamonds, timber, and, to a lesser extent, iron ore.

In addition to abundant resources in Nimba, there is also commerce and something that resembles a functioning economy. One can buy foodstuffs and commercial goods, and patronize small restaurants or other businesses. Most interesting, however, is that Nimba County has an economic relationship with the Forces Nouvelles (FN) in the neighboring Ivory Coast.

The FN represents a coalition of rebel factions that were allied against the government of the Ivory Coast in a civil war and occupied the northern half of the Ivory Coast in 2002.<sup>38</sup> The significance of the occupation by the FN is that they control the most of the Ivory Coast’s agricultural land which produces domestic food crops including rice, maize, millet, sorghum groundnuts and bananas.<sup>39</sup> As such, there is local commercial trade between Nimba County and the FN in the Ivory Coast. The businessmen that run Nimba County provide transportation for some FN commercial agricultural goods from the border with the Ivory Coast through Nimba County to other destinations in Liberia, including the port of Monrovia.

The salient point is that Nimba County exists mostly independent of the government in Monrovia and is providing for itself what the government cannot.

Furthermore, there is a tremendous amount of revenue and wealth that is generated in Nimba County, much more so than Monrovia's international and bi-lateral partners are likely aware of. In any case, the wealth that is generated in Nimba County is not a secret to the government in Monrovia. Accordingly, the businessmen in Nimba County likely distribute a considerable amount of patronage to the political elite in Monrovia for the autonomy that Nimba County enjoys. The relationship between the businessmen in Nimba County and the political elite in Monrovia can best be described as reverse patronage. The fact is that the government in Monrovia recognizes that Liberia's civil wars were started in Nimba County and should Monrovia ever seek to severely change the dynamics of the business interests in Nimba, the next civil war could be started and funded by those same interests from Nimba County.<sup>40</sup> It has happened before and can happen again. Accordingly, the government in Monrovia is irrelevant for society because the government has failed its Positive Sovereignty role and cannot provide equity in the distribution of scarce services and public goods, if any at all.<sup>41</sup>

In the Ivory Coast, the problem is a bit more intractable. The FN, an ethnic group itself, is dug in and they have created a favorable situation for themselves that they could never hope to replicate through a negotiated political settlement with elected officials in Abidjan. The Ivory Coast is de facto bifurcated. It is split, balkanized and the only way to seal the rift is for one side to impose its will on the other. However, both the government in Abidjan and the FN lack the capacity to impose their will on the other. Furthermore, given the results of the recently disputed Presidential election, it seems increasingly likely that the Ivory Coast may remain divided for the foreseeable future.

Following the November 28, 2010 Presidential run-off election, the international community recognized opposition leader Alassane Ouattara as the winner of the election.<sup>42</sup> After the results of the election were announced in favor of Ouattara, however, the incumbent President, Laurent Gbagbo, claimed the vote was a coup and he declared himself the winner of the election.<sup>43</sup> On 04 December 2010, Gbagbo had himself sworn in for another term as President.<sup>44</sup> With the backing of the international community, Ouattara claimed that he, too, had been sworn into office as the duly elected President of the Ivory Coast.

Commenting on this situation on January 18, 2011, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire said that current conflict in the Ivory Coast is "ethnic in nature" with large-scale displacement caused by the "political polarization of ethnic groups".<sup>45</sup> Currently, there are parallel governments in the Ivory Coast with their base of support falling along geographical lines. Gbagbo, with the support of government forces, controls the south, and Ouattara controls the north of Ivory Coast with the support of the FN. If the international community and sub regional African organizations do not do what is necessary to make Gbagbo concede, this may lead to a new civil war or at least a situation where each president may govern over his half of the country, a defacto balkanization of the country along the lines established during the previous civil war.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, this is a viable option for the FN because of the enduring economic relationship that it has not only with Nimba County in Liberia but also with neighboring countries Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana. Further complicating the potential for a negotiated settlement between the Ivorian government and the FN is Gbagbo's decision to accept balkanization of the Ivory Coast as an alternative to hold



onto power rather than to concede to Ouattara and have nothing. Personal Rule and State Inversion are both in play in the Ivory Coast and it is an affliction from which recovery is very, very difficult indeed.

As noted in the three African countries discussed in this paper, balkanization is not a concept and it is not a theory. Balkanization is happening right now on the African continent due to State Inversion and Personal Rule. In addition to the three countries discussed in this paper, there are, in the author's opinion, an additional 13 countries that are listed as either "critical" or "in danger" on the Failed State Index that have social conditions that could trigger ethnic mobilization and other factors that may lead to balkanization.<sup>47</sup>

If the balkanization of Africa is a security challenge that US policy seeks to avert, then there is an immediacy to this problem. In the near future, Africa's security challenges will be greatly exacerbated by the continent's surging population. The youth bulge is, arguably, Africa's most pressing security challenge. The United Nations Population Division reports that as of 2010, 42.4 percent of Africa's total population is under the age of 14 and 20.2 percent of the population is in the 15-24 age group.<sup>48</sup>

There is much literature on the subject of Africa's population. Many sources claim that Africa's population reached the one billion mark in 2009 and almost all sources agree that Africa's population will double, possibly reaching the two billion mark by 2050.<sup>49</sup> Right now, the United Nations estimates indicate that there are nearly 500 million Africans under the age of 18.<sup>50</sup> By 2050, the UN estimates that there will be nearly one billion under the age of 18 and 70% of Africa's population will be at the prime fighting age of 30 and below.<sup>51</sup> If Africa cannot take care of its own problems now, how

then will Africa secure, feed, educate, employ and make good citizens out of a billion more Africans in the next 40 years?<sup>52</sup> The implication of the youth bulge is that the inability of African states to adequately integrate their youth is likely to perpetuate balkanization through a cycle of political instability, ethnic wars, revolutions, anti-government activities and radicalization of some who may seek to commit acts of terrorism against the West in general, and in particular, against the United States.<sup>53</sup>

Indeed, there is immediacy to resolving the problems of poor governance, insecurity, and other factors that can perpetuate the balkanization of African states. Left unresolved, Africa's primary export in the future will be insecurity as the youth of the continent are recruited, indoctrinated and utilized for violence and criminality, and manipulated for any number of other subversive purposes.<sup>54</sup>

U.S. policy in Africa pursues the shared goal of ending conflict in Africa by supporting African conflict mediation and strengthening African capacities to mitigate conflict and carry out peace support operations. To do so, the U.S. works directly with lead African mediators, bilaterally with African Governments, and multilaterally with the African Union, the United Nations, and African sub-regional organizations. One can summarize the end of the policy as supporting African leadership and African solutions to African problems.<sup>55</sup>

Within the policy, the U.S. has four ways to engage in relations with African nations. The first way is to provide security assistance programs to build capacity at the level of the African Union, at the sub-regional level, and at the level of individual states that is critical to securing the objective of a peaceful African continent. The second way is to promote democratic systems and practices. The third way is to promote

sustainable and broad-based, market-led economic growth. The fourth way is to promote health and social development.

U.S. policy for Africa has helped millions of Africans in multiple ways, but the policy is really insufficient to achieve the end of the policy because it does very little to address the Positive Sovereignty deficit in Africa. This paper contends that democratic systems and practices are neither necessary nor sufficient to address the Positive Sovereignty deficit in Africa. As such, U.S. policy for Africa must make its first priority to reduce the Positive Sovereignty deficit.

African scholars would recommend that any policy to build capacity or change behaviors must be compatible culturally with Africans and should start first with something that the target is already doing but could do better.<sup>56</sup> With that in mind, this paper makes the following proposal for U.S. policy in Africa.

Africa has a tradition of non-interference in the internal affairs of other African states.<sup>57</sup> Recently, however, there has been a debate among some African leaders and academics that it is time to rethink how Africa should conduct its affairs. Specifically, the conversation is about moving away from a tradition of non-interference to a policy of non-indifference to issues concerning the Positive Sovereignty deficit in Africa.<sup>58</sup> This debate is an opening that U.S. policy can exploit. Particularly, U.S. policy should seek to promote the non-indifference doctrine, especially in the institutions of the African Union (AU) and Sub-Regional Organizations (SROs) like ECOWAS and SADC. The objective of this policy would be: (1) African states and African leaders police themselves multilaterally; and (2) African leaders multilaterally enforce standards of

good governance which mitigate the Positive Sovereignty deficit as well as chronic insecurity and other conditions that perpetuate balkanization.

The good news is that the policy framework on the African side already exists to implement this strategy. The Constitutive Act of the African Union requires that all member States must observe certain fundamental values and standards, including respect for human rights, democratic governance, and the condemnation of unconstitutional changes of governments. A member State failing to observe those standards could be subject to political and economic sanctions.<sup>59</sup>

Likewise, Article 4 of the Constitutive Act provides for the right of the African Union, in certain cases, to intervene in a member State and for the right of a member State to request such intervention. Article 4 of the Act provides for:

- (h) the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity;<sup>60</sup> and
- (j) The right of Member States to request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security.<sup>61</sup>

The Protocol on Amendments to the Constitutive Act, which was adopted in February 2003 and is not yet in force, amends Article 4 (h) by adding at the end of the sub-paragraph the words as well as a serious threat to legitimate order to restore peace and stability to the Member State of the Union upon the recommendation of the Peace and Security Council.<sup>62</sup>

There are other charters that provide precedence for intervention in the affairs of African states. There is the 1981 Organization for African Unity African Charter of

Human and People's Rights and the 2007 African Union Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.<sup>63</sup> Both of these documents address, among other issues, the following: freedom of religion; rule of law and justice; good governance; development; freedom of the press; individual freedoms and liberty; combating corruption; pluralism; and democratic values

Accordingly, the “way” of the proposed policy is: The objective of U.S. policy for Africa is to support African leadership and African solutions to African problems to secure a peaceful African continent. This policy works through existing multilateral institutions and African policy frameworks to build the capacity of the AU and sub-regional organizations like SADC and ECOWAS to adopt a doctrine of non-indifference toward African states that do not meet minimal standards of good governance. Punitive measures may start with criticism of failing policies and failed leadership and end with more punitive forms of physical intervention in the affairs of failed and failing African states to mitigate the Positive Sovereignty deficit, chronic insecurity and other factors that contribute to ethnic mobilization and balkanization.

This paper has made three points: (1) In Sub-Saharan Africa, the Positive Sovereignty deficit, creates social conditions that lead to chronic insecurity and the unequal distribution of goods and services which contributes to ethnic mobilization and ethnic conflict that drive state balkanization; (2) Because of the Positive Sovereignty deficit, the youth bulge has the potential to exacerbate all of Africa's security challenges, including ethnic conflict and state balkanization; and (3) In order to avert a security crisis in Africa, U.S. policy should promote an African doctrine of non-indifference and support African solutions to African problems through multilateral enforcement of standards of

good governance in order to mitigate the Positive Sovereignty deficit, chronic insecurity and other conditions that perpetuate Balkanization.

In the end, Positive Sovereignty is the salve that heals social wounds and rights the wrongs of State Inversion. States that exercise Positive Sovereignty are fair and just and have social conditions that mitigate the conditions described in Zimbabwe, Liberia and the Ivory Coast. Unfortunately, Zimbabwe, Liberia and the Ivory Coast are not statistical outliers in Africa. They are the norm. There are more states in Africa like the aforementioned than not. The Positive Sovereignty deficit in Africa must be addressed because ethnicity is exploding, ethnic groups are organizing, fiefdoms are being established and the youth is being recruited, indoctrinated and utilized for violence and criminality, and manipulated for any number of other subversive purposes.<sup>64</sup>

## Endnotes

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